



EXHIBIT 11
DATE 3-12-07
SB 116

March 11, 2007

TO: Members of House Business and Labor Committee

FROM: Al Ward, AARP Montana

RE: Support of SB 116, Security Freeze Protection From Identity Theft

Mr. Chairman and members of the House Business and Labor Committee, my name is Al Ward, Associate Director of AARP Montana, a nonpartisan, non-profit organization with 154,000 members in this state. AARP Montana has worked on this legislation since September of 2005 with the interim committee and strongly encourages your approval of SB 116. The details of this legislation have been well discussed and debated in the interim and in the Senate with both sides getting some and giving some. We encourage your approval of this bill without significant amendment.

Every day, an estimated 27,000 Americans become victims of identity theft, costing consumers at least \$5 billion a year. Id Theft cost businesses \$48 billion in 2003, according to the FTC. Unraveling the problems of identity theft can take hundreds of hours and stretch out over years. One in five of our members have been victims of *identity theft* ~~security freeze~~ or know a victim and 77% of our members are concerned about becoming a victim of identity theft.

A security freeze is your best measure to protecting yourself from identity theft. Twenty-eight states have adopted security freeze laws and many more are considering it. Money Magazine promotes placing a security freeze as the #1 way to protect your family. Over the last 4 years I've conducted fraud workshops with the Attorney General's office and State auditor's staff. Identity theft continues to dominate fears of participants and a security freeze would alleviate those concerns. If this bill passes, we will communicate to Montanans the importance of placing a security freeze.

A security freeze works best if it is fast to put on and lift, low in cost and simple to use. This bill meets these requirements. The provision that allows victims to place a security freeze in 24 hours is crucial, since victims incur significant loss when thieves first obtain their identity. This bill imposes reasonable fees, thoroughly discussed by the interim committee and the Senate Business committee. The legislature should be proud to pass this bill. Our special appreciation to the interim committee and sponsors for their hard work and dedication to helping consumers. We urge this committee to concur in SB 116.

Support SB116 Providing Montanans "Security Freeze" Protection against Identity Theft

- Every day, an estimated 27,000 Americans become victims of identity theft (19 each minute, and 10 million annually).
- Identity theft costs consumers at least \$5 billion, and businesses \$48 billion annually. Victims in the U.S. spend 297 million hours per year unraveling the problems caused by identity theft.
- SB 116 will allow Montanans to voluntarily freeze their credit report, which *prevents* a thief from opening new accounts or new loans with stolen personal information.
- Twenty-six states already provide this optional protection to their citizens; Montana consumers deserve this protection if they choose to use it. Montanans continue to voice their concern about becoming a victim of this crime.
- SB116 will work for Montana consumers only if it is simple to use, fast to apply and remove, and low cost. We encourage legislators not to amend SB 116.

Sen. Brueggeman (Polson) and Rep. Keane (Butte) are the main sponsors of SB 116 along with all of the members of the Economic Affairs Interim Committee- Sen. Cocchiarella (Missoula), Sen. Hansen (Harlem), Sen. Steinbesser (Sidney), Rep. Gallik (Helena), Rep. McGillvray (Billings) and Rep. Milburn (Cascade).

If you need more detailed information about SB116, the security freeze bill, please contact AARP MT at 457-4715. Fact Sheets and a short video program are available for you and your community.

AARP Montana is a nonprofit, nonpartisan membership organization dedicated to financial and health security with over 153,000 members.

AARP MT, 30 W. 14th St., Ste 301, Helena, 59601, mtaarp@aarp.org



The power to make it better.®

Support SB116

Providing Montanans "Security Freeze"

Protection against Identity Theft

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